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May 1924

STANDARD VARIETIES OF CHICKENS

IV. THE ORNAMENTAL BREEDS AND VARIETIES



THE ornamental breeds and varieties of chickens often have an unusual appeal; and a breeder who may be first attracted to such fowls by their unusual plumage or form may later develop a flock which has decided utility value. Thus the keeping of ornamental breeds and varieties of chickens contributes to pleasure and the possibility of ample reward as well. This bulletin discusses the qualities of these interesting fowls so that the inexperienced person may make a wise selection by reason of familiarity with the merits of the different breeds.

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STANDARD VARIETIES OF CHICKENS.

IV. THE ORNAMENTAL BREEDS AND VARIETIES.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.		Page.
Reasons for keeping chickens.....	1	Breeds and varieties—Continued.	
Breeds and varieties.....	2	Oriental class:	
Polish class: Polish.....	3	Sumatra.....	20
Hamburg class: Hamburg.....	7	Malay.....	20
Game class: Game.....	13	Miscellaneous class:	
		Sultans.....	23
		Frizzles.....	23

REASONS FOR KEEPING CHICKENS.

THE POULTRY INDUSTRY of the United States is mainly concerned with keeping chickens for the production of food. This may take the form of producing either eggs or meat for market or of keeping fowls which combine these two qualities and produce both market eggs and table fowl. In addition to the chickens which are kept primarily for their economic value or utility, there are a considerable number throughout the country whose owners keep and breed them mostly for pleasure. These fowls may represent decided beauty of plumage or form or may be kept because of their rarity or unusual appearance and are often termed ornamental fowl. It is this interest on the part of poultry breeders which accounts in a measure for the large number of standard breeds and varieties and great variation in type, color, and color patterns.

The breeds and varieties which are included in this bulletin are at the present time kept mainly as ornamental fowls. They may and often do possess considerable economic value, and some of them could undoubtedly be developed, by proper selection and breeding, into birds having high utility qualities. For example, the Hamburgs are fowls which have always been rated as very prolific layers, although their eggs run somewhat small. Because they have not been so extensively kept in this country and because they have not been bred very systematically for any purpose other than exhibition, their utility qualities have not been developed to the highest possible point. In the same way the Polish fowls are frequently prolific layers, but the crests which they carry, while unique in appearance and adding greatly to the beauty of the fowl, are considerable handicaps when the birds are kept for utility purposes.

¹ Mr. Slocum resigned from the department October 11, 1921.

The breeds and varieties described here are included in the Polish, Hamburg, Game, Oriental, and Miscellaneous classes. For a description of the fowls sufficiently detailed to enable one to breed exhibition specimens it will be necessary to refer to the American Standard of Perfection, a book published by the American Poultry Association and the guide by which all the poultry shows in the United States are judged.



FIG. 1.—White-Crested Black Polish female.

BREEDS AND VARIETIES.

The Polish class includes the following varieties: White-Crested Black, Bearded Golden, Bearded Silver, Bearded White, Buff Laced, Non-Bearded Golden, Non-Bearded Silver, and Non-Bearded White.

The Hamburg class includes the following varieties: Golden Spangled, Silver Spangled, Golden Penciled, Silver Penciled, White, and Black.

The Game class, as given in the Standard of Perfection, includes not only the larger varieties of Games but also the corresponding varieties of Game Bantams. The Game Bantams are not included in this publication for the reason that all bantams are grouped together in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1251. The following varieties of the Game class are described: Black-Breasted Red, Brown Red, Golden Duckwing, Silver Duckwing, Birchen, Red Pyle, White, and Black.

The Oriental class includes the following standard breeds and varieties described in this publication: Sumatra, Black variety; Malay, Black-Breasted Red varieties. This class as given in the



FIG. 2.—Bearded Golden Polish male.

Standard of Perfection includes also the Black-Breasted Red Malay Bantam.

The Miscellaneous class includes the following standard breeds described in this publication: Sultans and Frizzles. As given in the Standard of Perfection this class likewise includes the Silkies, a bantam breed, and therefore not included in this publication.

POLISH.

The origin of the Polish breed of fowls is in considerable doubt. It is probable that the progenitors of the present Polish came from

Poland, hence the name of the breed, but their ancestors probably came from Russia or possibly from Italy. There are no standard weights for this breed. In type and size the breed is much like the Leghorn. The size is quite variable, but the birds should be at least as large as the standard Leghorn, and many specimens are considerably larger. It is a neat, trim-bodied fowl which should be set fairly well up on the legs.

The body should be long and the breast well rounded. The body and back line should show a distinct slope downward from the shoulders to the tail. The tail should be long and well spread,

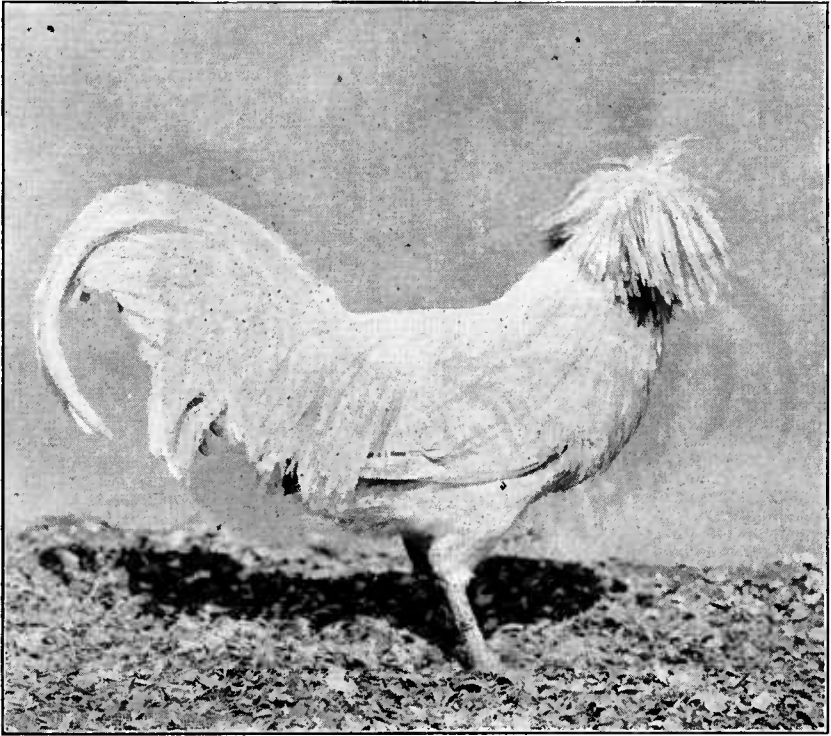


FIG. 3.—Bearded White Polish male.

carried low, and in the male should be well furnished with sickles and coverts. The comb is small and V-shaped, being more or less hidden by the crest. Occasionally birds occur in which the comb is absent and these birds are preferred to those in which the comb is present. The crest, which all Polish carry on top of the head, is very characteristic of the breed and adds greatly to its beauty. The crest should be large and bushy and must be set squarely on the head with no tendency to tip to one side. The ear lobes of all varieties of Polish are white. Some of the varieties are bearded, while others are nonbearded. The beard consists of feathers growing on the throat of the fowl and well up to or behind the eyes, forming a bunch of feathers or beard at this point. The only difference between

bearded and nonbearded varieties of the same color is the presence or absence of the beard.

The color of the eggs laid by this breed is white and the birds are classed as nonsitting or nonbroody. The legs and toes are a slate blue in all varieties, except the White-Crested Black, in which they are a darker blue, approaching black. The color of the skin is gray or grayish white, which does not recommend these birds particularly for table purposes in this country, where the demand is for yellow-skinned fowls.

The White-Crested Black Polish is a nonbearded variety. The color of plumage is black throughout in both sexes, with a greenish

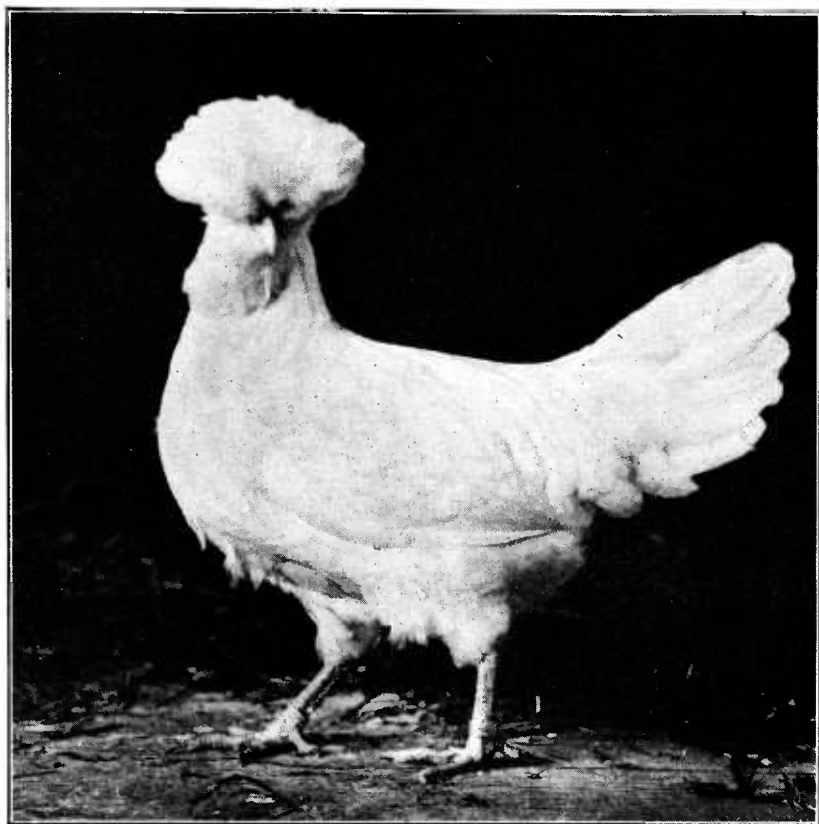


FIG. 4.—Bearded White Polish female.

sheen or cast except for the crest, which is white. This color scheme and the distinct contrast between the white crest and the black body makes this variety very beautiful and rather difficult to breed in perfection. Sometimes the crest shows some black feathers, particularly in front, but crests as free from black as possible are those which are in demand. The undercolor is dull black throughout.

The Bearded Golden Polish, as its name implies, is a bearded variety. The color scheme of this variety is very beautiful, the plumage being a golden bay laced with black throughout except for the

fluff, which is light bay with some black mixture or tinge, and for the primary feathers, which are bay with a black end. The color scheme of the male and the female are identical. The undercolor in both sexes is slate throughout.

The Bearded Silver Polish is likewise a bearded variety. Like the Bearded Golden, it is a beautiful variety, the color scheme being identical; the only difference is that wherever golden bay appears in the feathers of the Bearded Golden variety it is replaced by white



FIG. 5.—Buff Laced Polish male.

in the feathers of the Bearded Silver variety. The undercolor is slate throughout in both sexes.

The Bearded White Polish, as its name implies, is a bearded variety. The plumage is a pure white throughout, free from any foreign color.

The Buff Laced Polish also is a bearded variety. In this variety the plumage color is buff laced with a paler buff. The only difference in the color of the male and the female is that the color of the male is somewhat richer or deeper than that of the female. The primary wing feathers of the female are plain buff without any lacing, while those of the male are laced with a paler buff only on the outer ends. The under color is a pale buff throughout.

The Non-Bearded Golden Polish, the Non-Bearded Silver Polish, and the Non-Bearded White Polish are identical with the corresponding bearded varieties except for the lack of the beard.

HAMBURG.

The Hamburg is said to have originated in Holland, although the name of the breed has come from the city of Hamburg, Germany. It is of rather small size, being if anything slightly smaller than the Leghorn. There is more or less variation in the size of the different varieties, the Black and Silver Spangled tending to run largest.

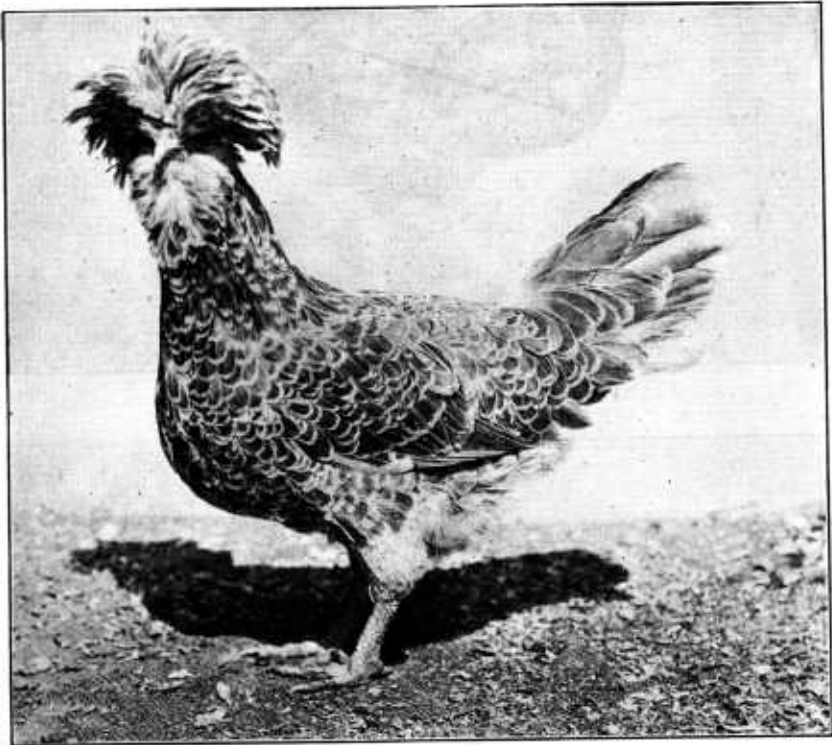


FIG. 6.—Buff Laced Polish female.

There are no standard weights for this breed. In type it resembles the Leghorn very largely, having much the same shape of body and being set up on its legs in about the same manner. The birds are very neat bodied, well rounded, and well finished throughout. The body is carried nearly level, the back line being practically so. The tail is carried comparatively low, the tail feathers are long and well spread, and in the male very profusely furnished with sickles and coverts. The comb is rose and runs rather large for the size of the bird. It is quite characteristic of the breed and should be a typical rose comb set firm and even on the head; the spike should be well developed and have a slight upward turn at the end. The ear

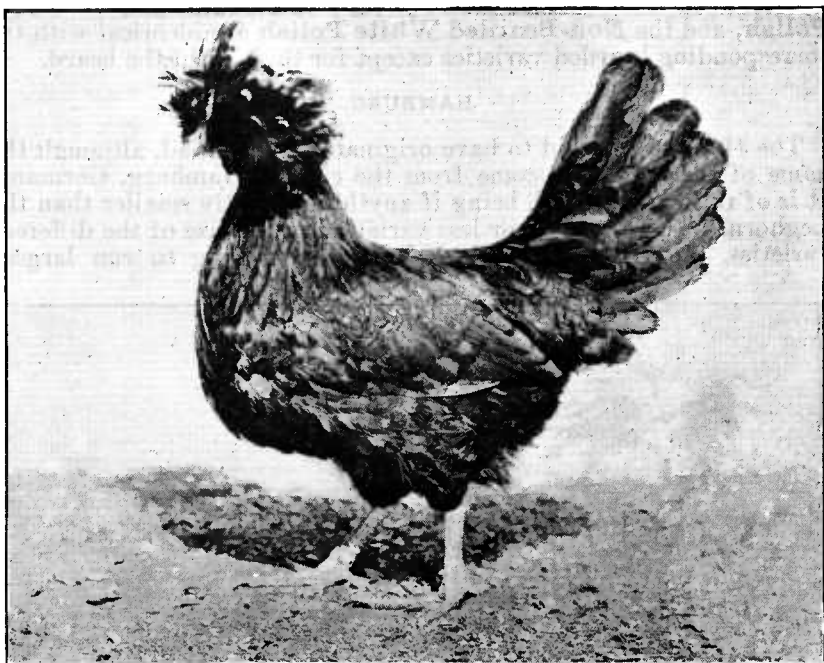


FIG. 7.—Non-Bearded Golden Polish female.

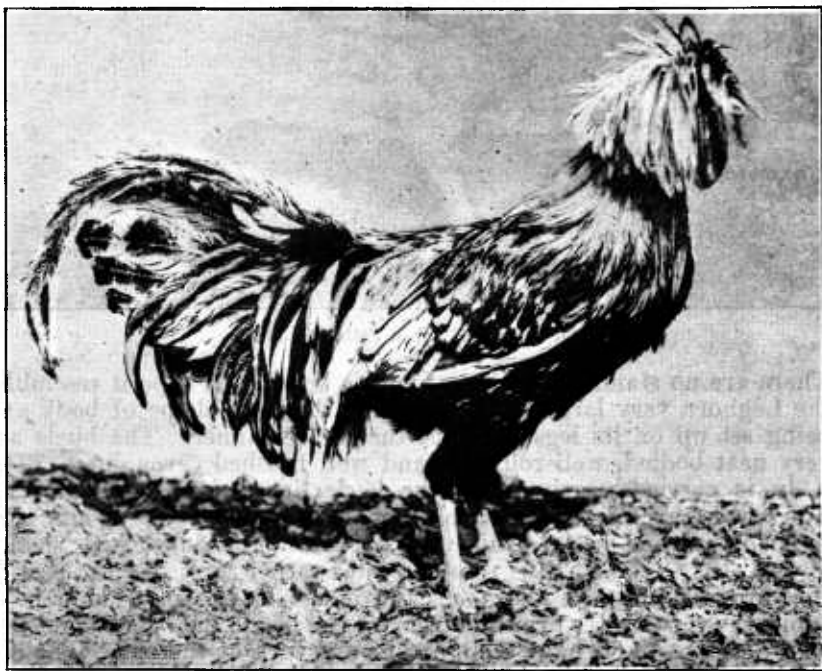


FIG. 8.—Non-Bearded Silver Polish male.

lobes are also characteristic of the breed, being of good size, white, and nearly round. An ear lobe flat and smooth is desired.

The color of the eggs laid by this breed is white, and the birds are classed as nonsitting or nonbroody. In Europe Hamburgs have had an enviable reputation as layers of large numbers of eggs but they have not been kept and bred extensively along that line in this country. The small size of the egg has been one reason for this. It is probable that with careful breeding it would be possible to increase the size of the eggs laid by the Hamburg and to develop strains that would be very prolific layers. The color of the legs and toes is slaty

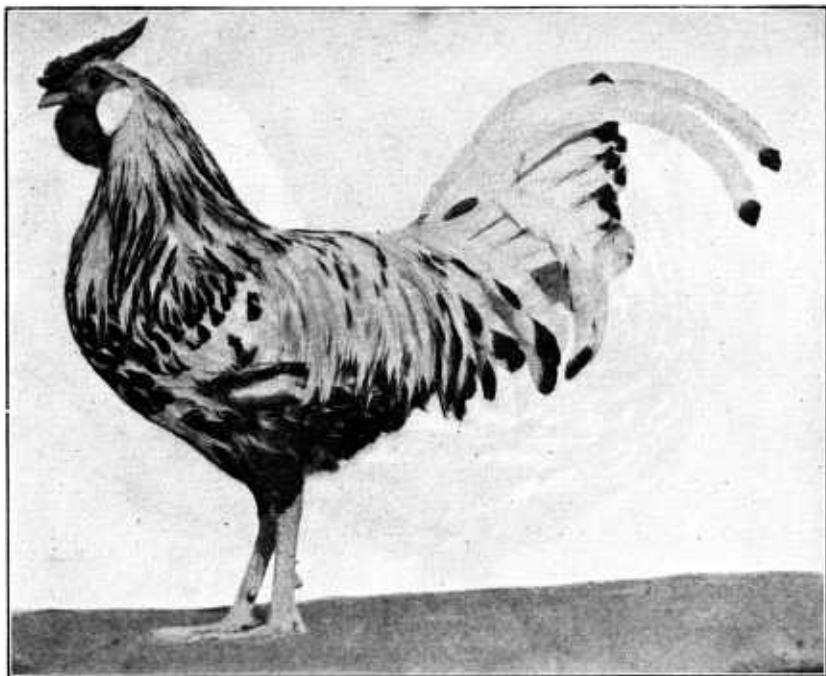


FIG. 9.—Silver Spangled Hamburg male.

or leaden blue in all varieties except the Black, in which they are black. The color of the skin is gray or grayish white.

The Golden Spangled Hamburg is one of the less common varieties, but when well marked is a very beautiful fowl. The head should be golden bay in color. The tail is black except for the tail coverts of the female, which are golden bay spangled with black. The hackle feathers are golden bay striped with black. The rest of the plumage is golden bay spangled at the ends of the feathers with a black spangle, this spangle being V-shaped as it runs up the feathers, the point of the V coming at the quill. The primary feathers, however, and some of the secondary wing feathers have crescent-shaped instead of V-shaped spangles. The spangles of the wing coverts should be so arranged as to form two distinct black bars across the

wing. The fluff of the male is bay tinged with slate, while that of the female is slate tinged with gray. The undercolor is slate throughout.

The Silver Spangled Hamburg is a very beautiful show specimen with its contrast of white feathers and black spangles. The color scheme in the main is the same as that of the Golden Spangled except that the feathers are white spangled with black instead of bay spangled with black. There are certain differences, however, the

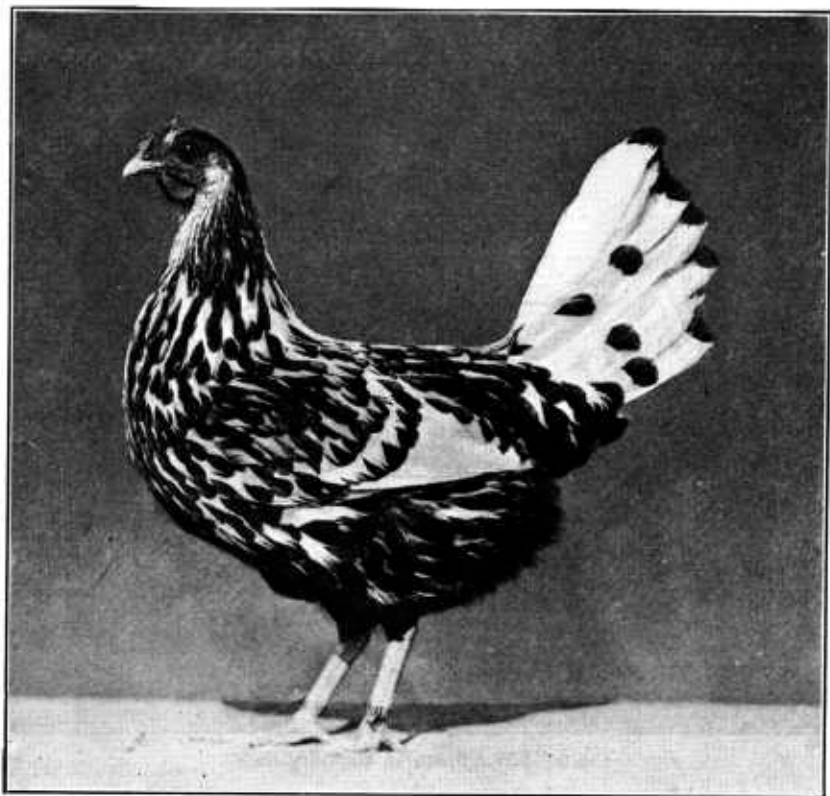


FIG. 10.—Silver Spangled Hamburg female.

hackle having elongated black spangles instead of stripes, and in both sexes each feather of the tail being white spangled with black. The fluff in both sexes is slate tinged with white. The undercolor throughout is slate.

The Golden Penciled Hamburg shows a considerable difference in the color scheme of the male and the female. In the male the general color is bay or reddish bay, except for the main tail feathers, which are black, with sickles and tail coverts black edged with reddish bay, while the upper webs of the wing coverts are slightly penciled with black bars. The primary wing feathers have their upper webs black and the secondaries have their upper webs penciled with

black and the lower webs have small black spots at the ends. The fluff also is black. In the female the general plumage color is bay, the feathers being penciled transversely with parallel black bars. The head, neck, and primary wing feathers of the female are bay without any penciling. The undercolor is slate throughout.

The Silver Penciled Hamburg is a variety in which the color scheme is practically identical with that of the Golden Penciled

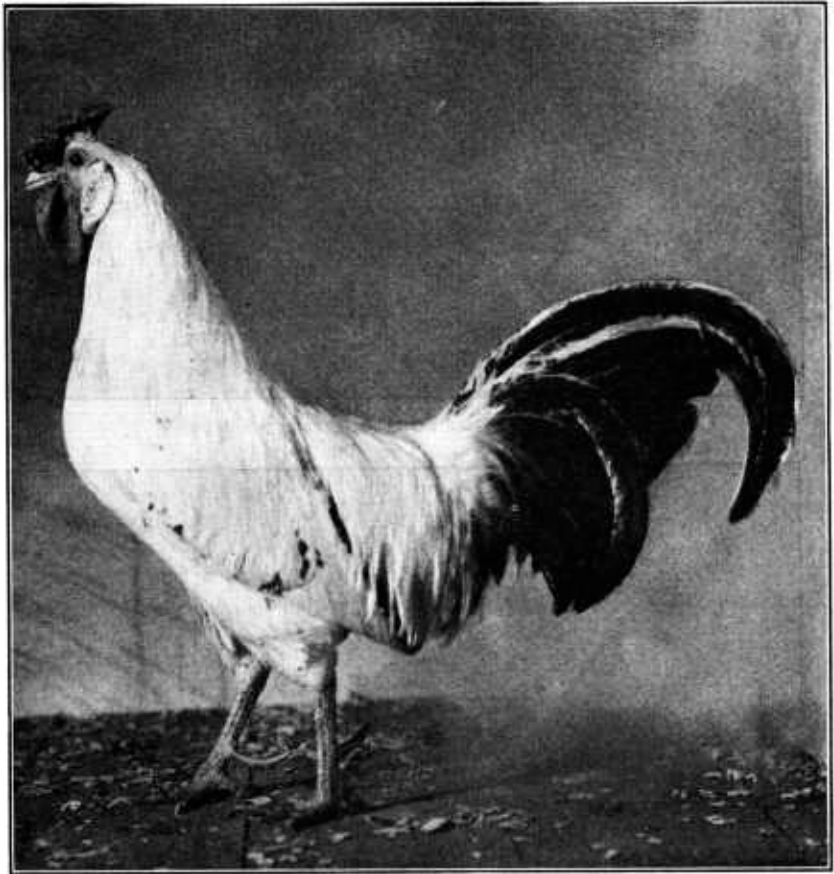


FIG. 11.—Silver Penciled Hamburg male.

Hamburg, except that where bay occurs in the Golden Penciled it is replaced by white in the Silver Penciled variety. Certain differences in the color scheme do exist, however. In the male the primary wing feathers are plain white and the secondaries have the upper webs black edged with white or gray, while the lower webs are white with a black stripe next the quill. The fluff of the male is slaty white instead of black. In the female the only difference in the color scheme from that of the Golden Penciled variety, except for the matter of the replacement of the bay by white, is at the base of the

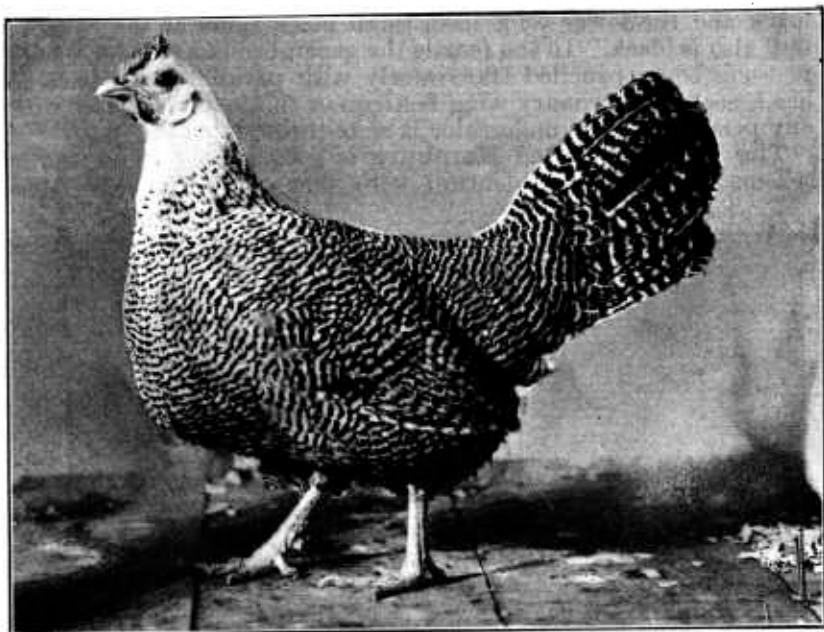


FIG. 12.—Silver Penciled Hamburg female.

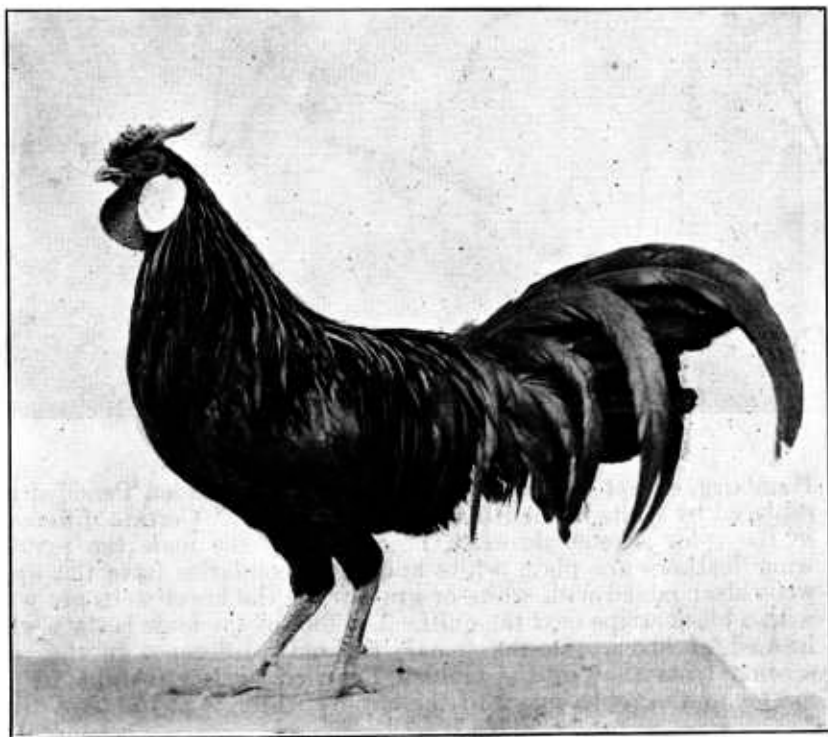


FIG. 13.—Black Hamburg male.

hackle, where some penciling is shown. The undercolor is slate throughout in both sexes.

The White Hamburg is rather less commonly seen in this country than any of the other varieties. It is pure white throughout, and free from any indication of foreign color.

The Black Hamburg is one of the more common varieties and is black throughout. On the surface the plumage color should show a decided or high green sheen, while the undercolor should be a dull black throughout.

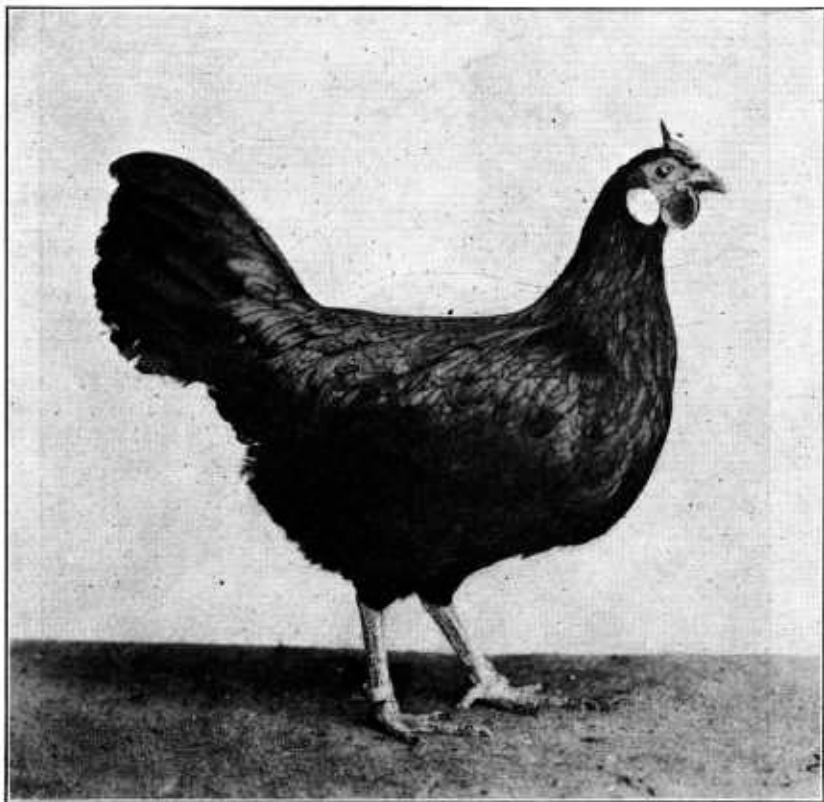


FIG. 14.—Black Hamburg female.

GAME.

The Game, or, as it is often termed in this country, the Exhibition Game, is undoubtedly a development from the English Game. In type the Game is peculiar and very characteristic. It is racy in appearance, alert, and full of snappiness. The breed is also full of stamina and vigor. It is tall, being set up high on legs which are long both in shank and thigh. This characteristic height and appearance of the Game are often termed "station," which, because it is so characteristic of the breed, is deemed by Game breeders to be most important. The shank and the greater part of the thigh should

show below the body. The head should be long and slender and the comb, which is single, should be erect in the female and rather fine.



FIG. 15.—Black-Breasted Red Game male.

The comb of the male is dubbed, or cut off, failure to have a dubbed comb being the cause of disqualification in cocks. The neck should be long and slender. The body is well rounded, the breast being

prominent and carried well up. When viewed from the side, the body has much the shape of an oxheart, the large end being uppermost at the shoulders. Viewed from above, the body shows great breadth at the shoulders and tapers down to the stern, giving it a flatiron shape. The body and back line slant down decidedly from shoulders to tail. The wings are short and held well up in place. The stern should be well tucked up, with no tendency toward bagginess. The



FIG. 16.—Silver Duckwing Game male.

tail is closely folded, running to a point and is carried low, about on the horizontal. The shape of the tail has resulted in its being called a whiptail. The legs must be straight and set wide apart. The bone must be of good size and quality but not coarse and should be round, not flat. The feathering of the Game is decidedly characteristic. The feathers should be short, close, and hard, so that they fit the body closely. The hackle should be rather scanty, especially in front, while the saddle feathers should be short, the ends not extending below the underline of the body. There must be no tendency toward

looseness of feathering. The whole body should be hard muscled and firm. The ear lobes are red or purple. No standard weights are given for the Games. The color of egg laid by this breed is brown or tinted, and the breed is classed as a broody breed. Game hens are said to make excellent mothers inasmuch as they are very assiduous in their care of the chicks and are quick to defend them from any danger.

The Black-Breasted Red Game male has a general top color ranging from light golden or orange to red. The shoulders and the

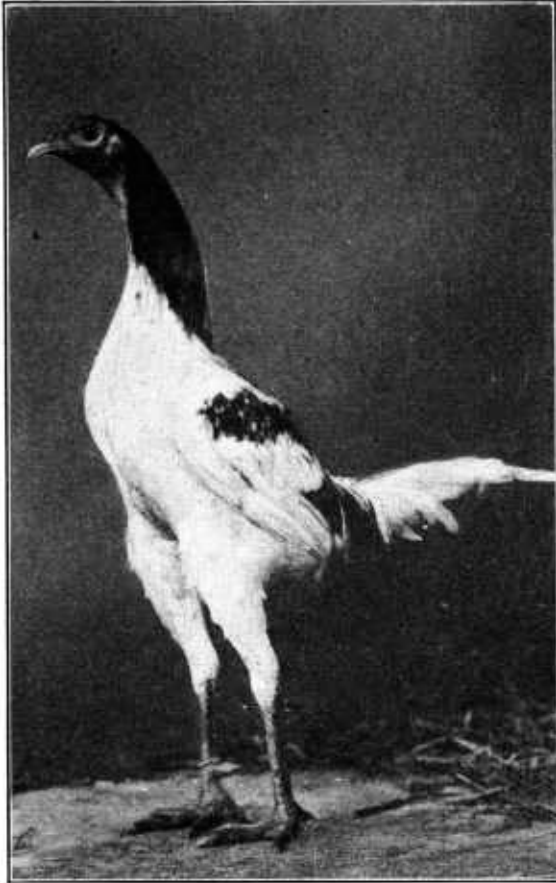


FIG. 17.—Red Pyle Game male.

wing fronts are black and there is a black bar extending across the wing formed by the black wing coverts. The primary wing feathers are almost entirely black and the secondaries are black except for a part of the outer webs, which are bay. The tail, front of the neck, breast, and body are black. In the female the head is golden and the hackle golden striped with black. The rest of the top color is a grayish brown with a stippling of golden brown. The primary wing feathers are black and the tail is black except the tail coverts

and the two top main tail feathers, which are brown. The front of the neck and breast are salmon, which gradually changes into the ashy-brown color of the body, thighs, and stern. The shanks and toes are willow or greenish yellow in color.

The Brown Red Game male has an orange head. The hackle and saddle are lemon striped with dark. The back and wing bows are also lemon, and the remainder of the wings and tail are black. The front of the neck and the breast are black laced with lemon; the body, stern, and thighs are black. In the female the entire



FIG. 18.—Sumatra male.

plumage is black except as follows: The head, which is lemon; the hackle, which is lemon striped with dark; and the front of the neck and breast, which are black laced with lemon. The shanks and toes are black.

The Golden Duckwing Game male has the head, hackle, and part of the outer webs of the secondary wing feathers and the outer webs of the lower primaries white. The wing bows, back, saddle, and smaller tail coverts are golden. The rest of the plumage is black.

In the female the head is a silver gray, the hackle being silver gray striped with dark. The wings, except the primaries, which are brown, are gray with a darker-gray stippling, as are also the back and the two top main tail feathers. The rest of the tail is black. The front of the neck and the breast are salmon, and the body, stern, and thighs are gray with an ashy tinge or cast. The shanks and toes are willow or a greenish yellow.

The **Silver Duckwing Game** male has the general top color, consisting of the plumage of the head, hackle, wing bows, back, saddle, and lesser tail coverts white. The outer webs of some of the lower

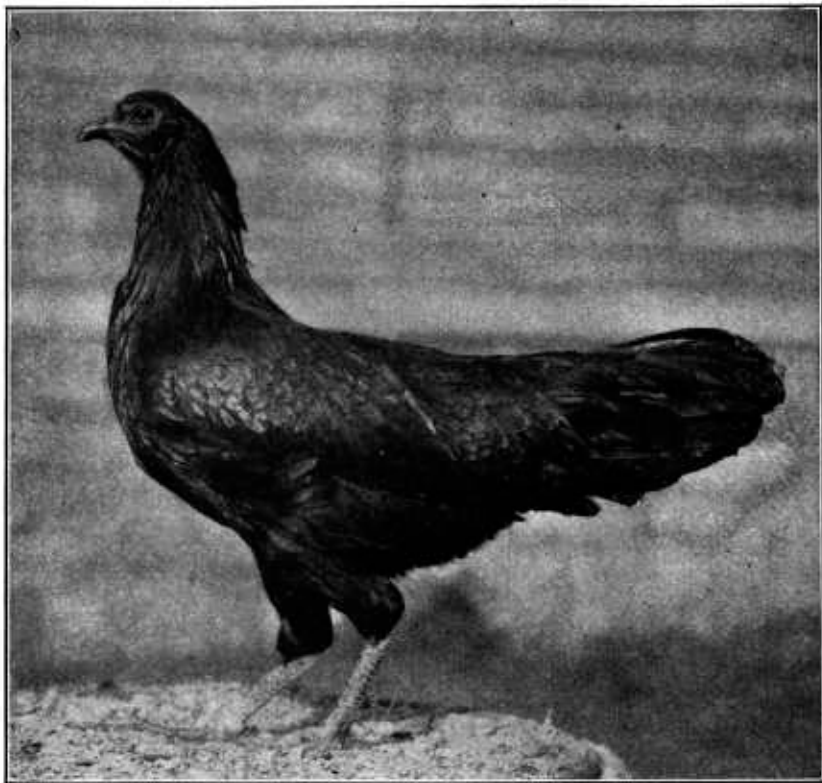


FIG. 19.—Sumatra female.

primary wing feathers and part of the outer webs of the secondaries also are white. The rest of the plumage is black. In color, the female is very similar to the female of the Golden Duckwing variety. The head is silvery gray and the hackle silver gray striped with black. The wings, except the primaries, which are black, are light gray stippled with darker gray. The back and the two top main tail feathers are likewise gray stippled with darker. The rest of the tail is black. The front of the neck and breast are salmon, running somewhat lighter in those sections than the Golden Duckwing female. The body, stern, and thighs are gray with an ashy tinge or cast. The shanks and toes are willow or greenish yellow.

The Birchen Game color scheme is exactly the same as that of the Brown Red Game except that in the Brown Red variety wherever lemon or orange occurs in the plumage of either sex it is replaced by white in the Birchen variety. The shanks and toes of this variety are black.

The Red Pyle Game male has the head and hackle orange, the wing bows red, the outer webs of the lower primary wing feathers bay, part of the outer webs of the secondaries red, the back red and



FIG. 20.—Black-Breasted Red Malay male.

the saddle orange. The front of the neck may also show some yellow tinge. The rest of the plumage is white. In the female the head is golden, the hackle white edged with gold, the front of the neck white with some tinge of salmon, and the breast salmon. The remainder of the plumage is white. The legs and toes are yellow.

The White Game plumage of both sexes is white throughout, free from any foreign color whatever. The legs and toes are yellow.

The Black Game plumage of both sexes is black throughout, showing a green luster on the surface, while the undercolor is dull black. The legs and toes are black.

SUMATRA.

The Sumatra breed is said to have originated, as its name would indicate, on the island of Sumatra. It is a medium-sized bird of graceful shape and carriage and characterized by a very long, low-carried tail, the male being abundantly furnished with sickles and coverts. There is no standard weight for this breed. The comb is pea and small in size. The ear lobes are small and red. The eggs



FIG. 21.—Black-Breasted Red Malay female.

laid by this breed are white and the breed itself is generally classed as a broody breed. The hens have a reputation of being excellent mothers. Sumatras are black throughout, the surface having a very highly developed green sheen, while the undercolor is dull black.

MALAY.

The Malay breed originated in southeastern Asia. In general appearance it resembles to a considerable degree the Games. It is of good size, with long neck and standing well up on its legs. The

back and body slant downward rather decidedly from shoulders to tail. The tail is quite closely folded and is carried in a drooping position, or in other words below the horizontal. The standard weights are as follows: Cock, 9 pounds; cockerel, 7 pounds; hen, 7 pounds; pullet, 5 pounds. The upstanding appearance of the bird and its general height are so important that standard heights, as well as weights, are given for this breed. They are as follows: Cock, 26 inches; cockerel, 18 inches; hen, 18 inches; pullet, 15 inches. The comb is rather small and is termed a strawberry comb. Unlike the Exhibition Games the comb of the male should not be dubbed. The



FIG. 22.—Sultan male.

head, which is of good size, has beetle brows, giving the bird a savage appearance. The breast should be prominent and carried well up. The legs should be long, strong, and set well apart. The ear lobes are red. The color of the egg laid by this breed is brown and the breed itself is commonly classed as a broody breed, the hens being excellent mothers. The shanks and toes are yellow in color.

In the male the plumage of the head, hackle, wing bows, back, and saddle are red, which in some parts may shade to a maroon. The outer webs of the primary wing feathers and part of the outer webs of the secondaries are bay. The rest of the plumage is black. In the female the general color of plumage is brown which varies in different parts from an ordinary shade of brown to a cinnamon brown

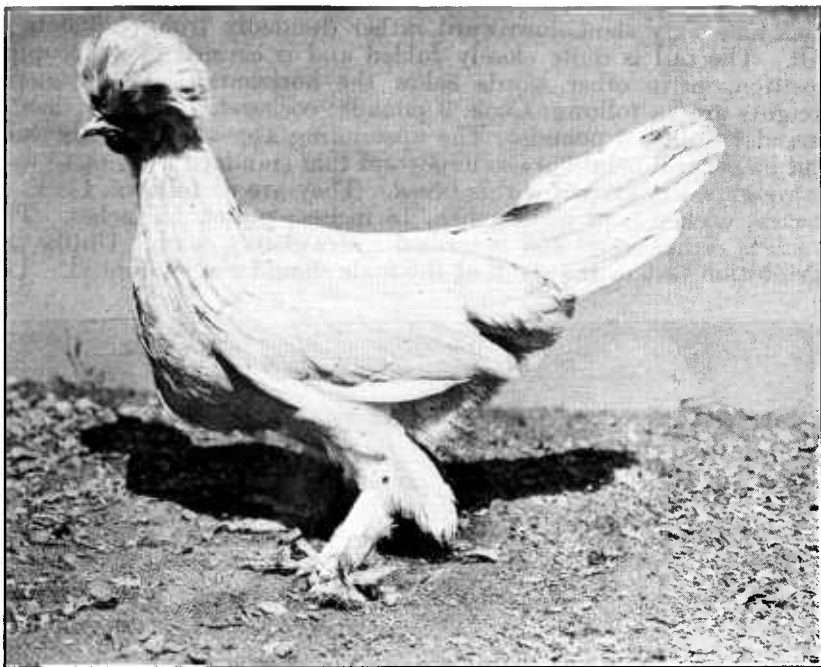


FIG. 23.—Sultan female.

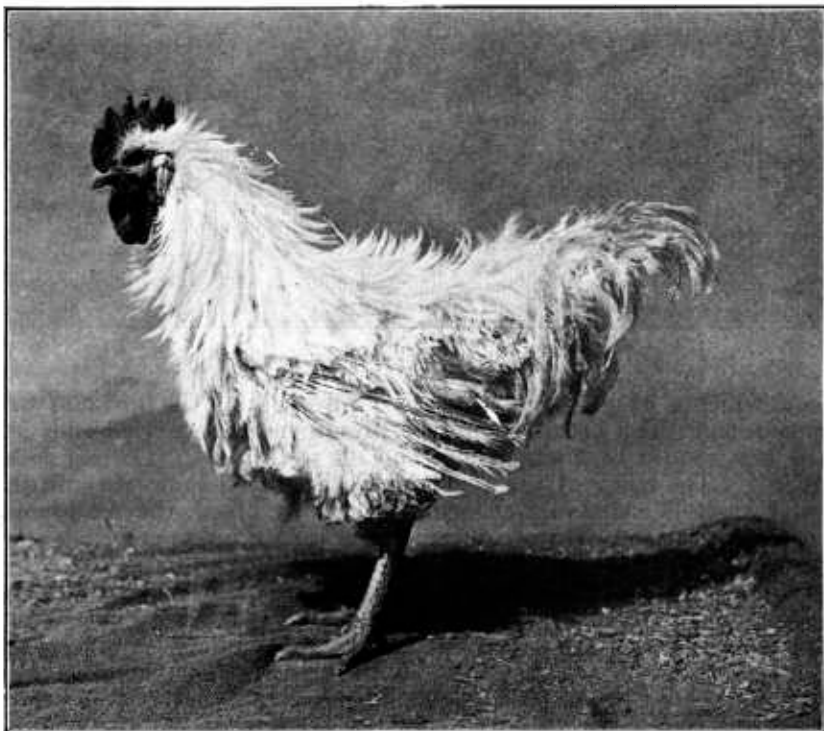


FIG. 24.—Frizzle male.

or even a very dark brown. The hackle is striped with black. The tail may be either very dark brown or black. The undercolor in both sexes is slate throughout with a more or less brown tinge.

SULTANS.

The Sultan is one of the breeds included in the miscellaneous class. It is rare in occurrence. The standard weight of the cock is 5 pounds. No standard weight is given for females. The principal characteristics of the Sultan which render it distinct from other breeds are the small V-shaped comb, rather large, compact crest, the presence

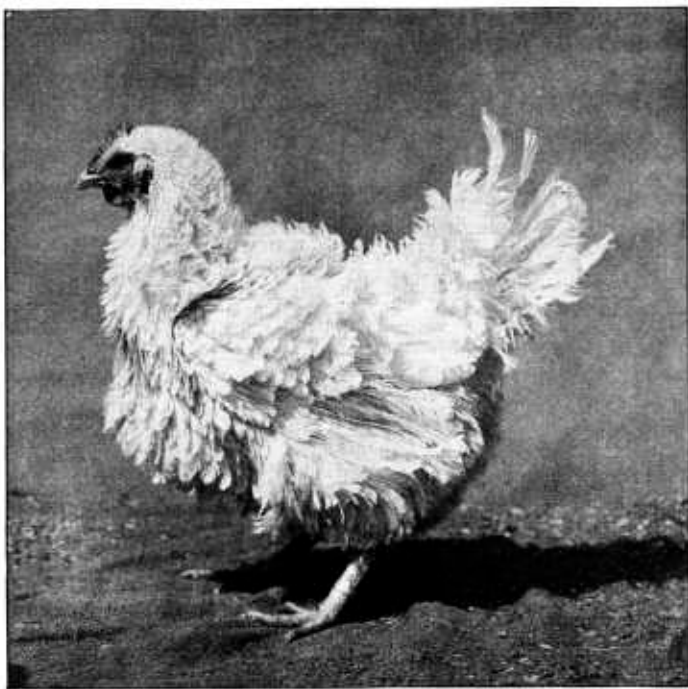


FIG. 25.—Frizzle female.

of a muff and beard, 5 toes, and heavy shank and toe feathering. Unlike most breeds in which the shanks and toes are feathered, the Sultan should have a vulture hock; that is to say, the feathers extending back from the hock should be stiff. The middle and outer toes should be well feathered. The ear lobe is bright red and the shanks and toes are a slate blue. The plumage is white throughout, free from any indication of foreign color.

FRIZZLES.

Included also in the miscellaneous class are the Frizzles. The standard requirements for this breed are not rigid and no standard weights are given. The principal characteristic is the peculiar feath-

ering. Instead of the feathers growing in the usual manner they show a curled or curved appearance, the end of the feather tending to curl up and back toward the head of the bird. A considerable variation occurs as to the amount of this curving, but the more pronounced it is the better. The comb should be single and the number of toes four. A number of colors are allowed in the Frizzles without dividing the breed into separate varieties. The colors which are allowed are black, white, red, and bay, it being only necessary that each bird be a solid color, that is, not mixed in color, and that when birds are shown in pairs, trios, or pens, the male and the females shall be of the same color. Frizzles are not very frequently seen and are kept almost entirely on account of their unusual appearance. They have no particular utility qualities which recommend them over the normally feathered fowls.

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

April 23, 1924.

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This bulletin is a contribution from

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